

Viereck Is Sentenced To 1 to 5 Years Under Foreign Agents Act

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Propagandist Thanks

Court for Fairness;
Calls Law Obscure

George Sylvester Viereck, German propagandist, was sentenced in District Court today to serve from one to five years in prison for violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act prior to the United States' entrance into the war.

The sentence, imposed by Justice Bolitha J. Laws, followed Viereck's conviction July 16 by a jury which found him guilty on six counts of failing to inform the State Department that he was an agent of the German Reich and for "willfully" concealing his activities from the Government. The conviction carried a maximum of 4 to 12 years' imprisonment and a \$6,000 fine.

Year Spent in Jail.

In imposing the sentence, Justice Laws said he had taken into consideration the year Viereck spent in District Jail after his first conviction in March of last year on similar charges. The Supreme Court reversed the first District Court conviction. Justice Laws pointed out that since Viereck had filed a pauper's plea in his most recent trial "there would be no purpose in imposing a fine."

Defense Attorneys Leo A. Rover and John J. Wilson, named by the court to represent the New York author and journalist, said they would appeal the case. Justice Laws earlier had overruled a motion by the defense for a new trial.

After Mr. Rover had requested the court to take into consideration the fact that the defendant was "a man of high intelligence," Justice Laws permitted Viereck to read a prepared statement in which he maintained that he was "guiltless of any willful violation of the law."

Thanks Court for Fairness.

"I wish to thank your honor for the fairness with which you have

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Viereck

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conducted my trial," Viereck said. "I wish to thank you especially for appointing as counsel for my defense two of Washington's most capable attorneys. In spite of all this, a jury has found me guilty, after debating for nearly nine hours."

The defendant added:

"The case was so complex, the line between the permissible and the nonpermissible so wavering and so thin that, in spite of the lucidity of your honor's charge, no jury, however intelligent and conscientious, could possibly ascertain the facts. The law itself is so obscure that it misled the Department of Justice and puzzled the courts no less than it mystified my attorneys and the Department of State.

"If I had worked for war as I have worked for peace I would not find myself indicted, much less convicted."